

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

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Newsletter

July 2015

Helping Foster Teens When They Age Out

By: Dr. John DeGarmo



Each year, between 20,000 to 25,000 foster children age out of the system and attempt to begin life on their own. Of the 500,000 children in care in the United States each year, this is a large number and disturbing percentage. For many foster children, foster care is a temporary service before returning home to a parent, moving in with a biological family member, or even beginning a new life in an adopted home. Yet, for thousands who do not find reunification with family in their lives, reaching 18 years of age can be a tremendously frightening experience. For others, 21 is the year where they may find themselves no longer part of the foster care system, depending upon the state the foster children reside in.

Research has shown that most foster children struggle with academics while in school. After school and college tutoring programs are helpful to those who have aged out, as they not only help the young adult with the material being studied, but also help to develop stronger study learning skills. As many aged out foster youth cannot afford school, assistance in this manner is most helpful. Communities can begin a foster scholarship fund, setting up a college fund for those foster children wishing to further their education. Supplies for school can be donated to local foster care agencies who work with children who will soon age out. These supplies can include paper, pencils, pens, calculators, backpacks, and other school needs. For those who are enrolled in college, bookstore gift cards and certificates can also be quite beneficial.

Along with school supply donations, household goods are also of great use to aged out youths. Clothes, cooking and bedding items, electrical appliances, furniture, and other household items can be donated to local foster care agencies. Contact the local foster care agency and enquire about being a transporter, one that provides transportation to aged out youth. As most former foster children struggle with money, it is likely that they will not have cars or means of transportation. Volunteers can help by providing transportation to job interviews, school venues, and medical appointments.

For those businesses who wish to assist aged out foster children, discounts on services and goods are most helpful. Whether it is clothing, groceries, computer, phones, and other electronic devices, medications, and even legal and financial services, discounts on these can help those former foster youth who are struggling financially. Those who own a business or service may also wish to consider hiring former foster children, and train them with the skills that fit the particular business or service and helping them develop workforce skills.

Perhaps the biggest impact one can make with those who have aged out of the system is to become an advocate of change. By contacting lawmakers, politicians, and publicity agents through means of emails, letters, phone calls, and other means of communication, one can bring attention to the needs of these young adults who are facing a series of challenges after leaving the foster care system. Along with this, these advocates of change can also post information in editorial letters, websites, public forums, and so forth. By lobbying for change, new laws can be introduced, and information can be brought forward to the general public.

Dr. John DeGarmo has been a foster parent for 13 years, now, and he and his wife have had over 45 children come through their home. He is a speaker and trainer on many topics about the foster care system, and travels around the nation delivering passionate, dynamic, energetic, and informative presentations. Dr. DeGarmo is the author of several foster care books, including the brand new book *Love and Mayhem: One Big Happy Family's Story of Fostering and Adoption*. Dr. DeGarmo is the host of the weekly radio program **Foster Talk with Dr. John**. He can be contacted at drjohndegarmo@gmail.com, through his Facebook page, Dr. John DeGarmo, or at his website, <http://drjohndegarmofostercare.weebly.com>.

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Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth & Reconciliation Commission

The Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was conceptualized and established by the TRC Convening Group, who were comprised of staff from the State of Maine Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) and Wabanaki child welfare programs, Wabanaki Health and Wellness, and the Wabanaki Program. The Commission was formally sworn in and seated in February 2013. With the completion of the Convening Group's mission to establish the TRC, it was time to assess the ongoing need for collaboration between Maine and Wabanaki people in relation to improved child welfare outcomes and healing for Wabanaki people. The outgrowth of this assessment was the establishment of Maine-Wabanaki REACH, a cross cultural collaborative with the expressed goals of promoting best child welfare practice between Native and non-Native people through reconciliation, engagement, advocacy, change and healing activities.

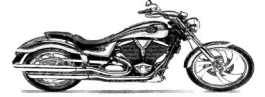
A poem for the occasion of the TRC Closing Ceremony. A call to action, a call to love. June 14, 2015 By: Penthea Burns

Reparation	I acknowledge	And in ourselves
I rose before the dawn	The terror...	Hope depends on our people...
This morning	The overwhelming use of force	Repairing the takings with generosity
I sat alone	Mass numbers	And justice
And turned on no lamp	Burning churches	Making amends for the lies
Comforted by the dark	Trails and trails of tears	With a truthful look at history
I sought to understand	In a darkened cellar	At ourselves
Myself	One small child stands alone	Restoring those terrorized
And all of history	Perfect and beautiful	With healing and compassion
I know what we've done	Exposed and vulnerable	Compensating for our silence
	Taken and severed	By listening and bearing witness
	From what she needs to be whole	And speaking out
	To belong	Silent no more
	To be home	Hope depends on...
I acknowledge	To know her people	Knowing that we do not own
The taking...	So that she may know herself	That we have no authority from God
Your land		Except a mandate to love one another
Your ancestors' lives		To love this land that we call home
Your children		To live in peace together
Your language and prayers	I acknowledge	
We took the untakeable	The silence...	I know what we've done
To feed a hunger	Invisibility and denial	I have heard your stories
That was only in our minds	My privilege	Witnessed your tears
	Which allows me	Been amazed by your resilience -
	To hide from harm	That you are still here
I acknowledge	To protect my interests	
The lies...	While you are exposed	While our collective acts
Doctrines and destinies	To risk	Are written on my heart
Spencer Phipps	We have never recognized	Our crimes need not define us
And old westerns	Nor measured our debt	For I know, too, what is possible
My history books	So we awaken now	When we choose justice and compassion
Executive decrees	To do that accounting	When we choose to acknowledge
Unsigned court orders		And repair
I don't even know	I acknowledge	To stand in solidarity
How many treaties we broke	That hope...	
	Depends on our people	This is the time
	Finding our shared humanity	This is the hour
		Shall we fulfill our mandate
		And remember who we are?
	Standing for what is good in our world	



Save the Date!

July 16, 2015: Rock and Ride for the Kids! The Red Knights Motorcycle Club Maine Chapter 3 and Chris and Brandy Bowles are organizing "Rock and Ride for the Kids" to benefit AFFM.



August 15, 2015: Join AFFM at the 36th Hampden Children's Day! Families are invited to join in the parade with their decorated bikes or scooters. For more information check out the Facebook page, www.facebook.com/HampdenChildrensDayMaine.



August 29, 2015: Join the New Balance 5K Road Race at the New Balance Factory Store, 12 Walnut Street Skowhegan to benefit Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and The Kinship Program! Registration begins at 8:00AM.



For more information about any of these events visit www.affm.net, call AFFM at 827-2331 or visit AFFM's Facebook page.

Amazing Opportunities for Youth in Care Created by Festival of "Fostering" Trees!

Josh's Care Packages

Josh's Care Packages support youth who are enrolled in college or a training program and are aging out of the foster care system. This initiative was developed from Joshua Magaw a former foster youth who aged out of the system and wanted to do something to make other foster youth feel special.

Rose Mary's Sacks of Love

The Festival of "Fostering" Trees is excited to bring you "Rose Mary's Sacks of Love". The brainchild of Rose Mary Polevy of York. This brand new initiative will strive to provide every youth entering foster care in Maine, a foldable duffle travel bag by Coldwater Canyon of their own. Each travel bag will also include a batch of each youth's favorite homemade cookies! These travel bags will be purchased from funds raised during the annual Festival of "Fostering" Trees event.

For more information about these Initiatives please contact Janalee at 351-1988 or email: janaleemoquin8@yahoo.com



**Adoptive & Foster
Families of Maine, Inc.**
& The Kinship Program

Attention AFFM members:

AFFM's Old Town office will be moving July
1st to:

34 Main Street

Orono, Maine 04473

Stop by and say hello!

Glass Half Full?

Are you a person who can give youth encouragement and extra support to make better decisions?

If you are, call Community Health and Counseling Services now!

We need dedicated people to provide 6-12 months of care to help get a teen back on track.



Training support/\$525 weekly compensation provided.

Resource Families must live within a 60 minute drive from East Winthrop



Call Melodie at 213-2164

Thank You!

AFFM had the honor of accepting a \$5,000 grant from The Maine Women's Giving Tree on June 10th. The grant will assist in providing winter coats and snow pants to Resource Families participating in the back to school program, Ready, Set, Go to Learn. AFFM would like to thank The Maine Women's Giving Tree in Brunswick for this incredible opportunity. The Maine Women's Giving Tree is committed to helping local non-profit organizations that support families, women and children in Brunswick, Maine and its surrounding communities including the towns of Harpswell, Topsham, Bath, Phippsburg, Woolwich and Freeport, Maine. AFFM would also like to thank board member, Tammy Cutchen for assisting with the grant and the amazing work she does supporting Maine's youth in out of home placements and AFFM!

To find out more about The Maine Women's Giving Tree visit: www.mainewomensgivingtree.org

For more information about AFFM's Ready, Set, Go to Learn Program call 1-800-833-9786 or email Meagan Sprague at meagan@affm.net

Kinship Corner

Tip Sheet for Relatives as Parents: Supporting a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered or Questioning Child

Families are often puzzled and uneasy when they become aware that their child questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is best to keep an open mind and open lines of communication with your child. He or she is likely to feel worried about your reactions. It is very important for your child to know and support them "no matter what".

As you work to keep an open attitude, consider the following:

- First, do not panic, listen to the child, and avoid jumping to conclusions.
- The social problems related to being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or questioning (LGBTQ) are much less than when you were young. Public acceptance of gays and lesbians has increased greatly, especially among mature young people.
- Sexual orientation is not about sex. It's about our identity and about who we are attracted to romantically as well as physically. You can understand this as you also have a sexual orientation. You did not choose it, and it is quite unlikely that you could change it.
- Gender identity is different from sexual orientation. Gender identity is about our experience as masculine (male) or feminine (female) or somewhere in between. When thinking about people who do not fit into typical American ideas of female or male, know that only some people want to change genders. Others want simply to be accepted as they are.

Here are some more things to be aware of:

- In high school, and even more in middle school, anti-gay language and attitudes are still widespread, and your child may be targeted for harassment. Maine has strong laws designed to protect LGBTQ youth from abuse. It is helpful to your child if you are ready to advocate for your child's safety and respectful treatment. Transgender youth are more often targeted than gay and lesbian youth.
- LGBTQ people are at increased risk of dropping out of school, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, depression, and suicide. This is not because of their sexual orientation. It is because of the extra stress our society places on them. Most LGBTQ youth grow through their adolescences well, especially if they have acceptance and support. When family and community fail to support them, they are at increased risk.

Common caregiver concerns and ways to think about them:

- I am afraid for the child's present and future safety and happiness. *Acknowledging orientation is a step to safety and happiness. Though there are challenges in being a minority group, there are also strengths.*
- I am afraid I did something wrong that led to my child questioning identity. *Having a LGBTQ child does not indicate parenting mistakes.*
- My religion holds that homosexuality is immoral. *Remember that your child needs love and acceptance.*

Here are some suggestions:

- Consult a pediatrician or mental health professional for more information about identity development. Be clear to your child that going for counseling does not mean there is something wrong with them.
- Take a half-way position between assuming your child will be forever LGBTQ and assuming that "it's just a phase." Nobody's future is predictable. So don't try to predict how this is going to work out for your child. Instead, express your support for your child's search for his or her identity.

This tip sheet was compiled from an article written by Dr. Peter Rees, a retired psychologist who has worked in Maine schools for many years, and is active with the Downeast Chapter of GLSEN.

Please respond to the AFFM Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to all the families that have responded to our satisfaction survey so far. If you are a foster, adoptive, and/or kinship care family you are still eligible to participate.



Your feedback will help AFFM:

- Evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of current services
- Identify what services are needed but not currently offered or available.
- Inform current & future funding sources (i.e. fundraising events, Grantors, General donors) the needs of families and the families' perceptions of AFFM.

Families can still participate in the survey online by either:

1. Clicking on the link sent to your email address (**check your spam folder, if you didn't see it**)
2. Complete the survey by going to the following website address: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/affmsurvey>



Don't have internet access? No worries. You can still participate in the survey!

AFFM volunteers will be on call to take your confidential responses in July.

Starting Monday July 6th through July 31st.

- * Call Stephanie Brown Monday and Wednesday at 207-976-1359 between 8:30 AM-4:00 PM and between 5:30PM-8:00 PM
- * Call Wendy Taggart: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 207-884-3084 between 9 AM -12 Noon and between 2 PM-8 PM.
- * Call Amber Young: Fridays at 207- 945-6556 between 12 PM -8 PM.

Introducing Julie N. Gillies, LCPC, NCC:

Julie Gillies has over 20 years as a therapist working with adults, couples, and children. Julie's specializes in prenatal training, ADHD, PTSD, ODD, depression, anxiety, mood disorders, anger management, attachment disorders, substance abuse, divorce, and grief and loss. All insurances, including Maine Care are accepted and sliding scale is offered. Julie was a therapeutic foster parent for over 20 years with reunification experience. She offers flexible hours!

**Julie N. Gillies LCPC, NCC
918 Broadway Street Suite 1
South Portland, Maine 04106
Tele: 207-329-0781 or 207-767-1131**

Adoption Announcement!



DeWayne and Heaven Lane are pleased to announce the adoption of their son Degan on 6/4/15 with honorable judge Woodcock at Bangor Probate Court.

Congratulations!



Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program

State-Wide Resource Family Support Groups

At times meetings are cancelled due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances, cancellation notices are sent out via the AFFM email list serve. Families are urged to call or email info@affm.net to be added to this service. The email list serve also provides information about available donated goods, social family activities, training events, DHHS and legislative updates, and more.

Augusta – Kinship only: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at The Buker Community Center, 22 Armory Dr, Augusta. Free on-site childcare available. For more info, please call Jan Partridge at 207-495-3864.

Augusta – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: Meets the 1st Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive). Onsite childcare is available with advanced notice. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email: Jim (Jim@affm.net) to RSVP (3-4 days in advance).

Bangor – Kinship only: 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Families and Children Together, 304 Hancock St. Suite 2B. Free on-site childcare is available. For more information, please call Maine Kids-Kin at 207-941-2347 or 1-866-298-0896.

Belfast – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets the 2nd Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30PM at the Parish House St. Margaret's Episcopal Church (95 Court St.) On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email Jim (jim@affm.net) to RSVP (3-4 days in advance).

Biddeford – Kinship: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10:00 – 11:30 am at the J Richard Martin Community Center, 189 Alfred St. Free on-site childcare is available with advanced notice. Please contact Diane Loranger at 423-2543 or call 1-800-833-9786 or email meagan@affm.net to RSVP. Please RSVP.

Bridgton – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 3rd Monday of the month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Community Care (Behind Reny's) 15 Depot St. Childcare is not provided at this time. Please RSVP to Vanessa at 647-2317 or AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 before you come.

Brunswick – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 4th Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Pleasant St. On-site childcare is available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP.

Caribou – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 1st Thursday of the month from 5:30 at Caribou Adult Education Building on Bennett Drive in between Caribou Rec and the gas station. Childcare is not provided at this time. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net to RSVP.

Dover-Foxcroft – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Mayo Regional Hospital, Borestone and Sebec conference room. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email sheila@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Ellsworth – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:00 – 7:00 pm at Ellsworth Elementary Middle School, 20 Forest Ave. On-site childcare is available with advanced notice. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services (CHCS) at 263-2014 or 461-8878 or email mkane@chcs-me.org. Thanks to a local grant awarded to CHCS, AFFM is able to provide mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles from home.

Farmington – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Roberts Learning Center (room 201 & 205), University of Maine at Farmington. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles one way. Please call 1-800-833-9786, or email Sheila (sheila@affm.net). Please RSVP 3-4 days before.

Houlton – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 2nd Thursday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Houlton CHCS, 2 Water Street. On-site childcare available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Lewiston – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at CMHC (12 High Street entrance) in Lewiston. The Tri-County Adoptive Foster & Kinship Assoc. offers trainings, as well as local support & resources. On-site childcare is provided with advanced notice. Call Denise Gove at 782-1138 or email her at dgrove@aol.com to RSVP.

Lincoln – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00–7:30PM at the Community Evangel Temple, 124 River Rd. Onsite Childcare is available with advanced notice. Mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles one-way. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email: Jim@affm.net 3-4 days in advance to RSVP.

Machias – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 1st Friday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Rose M Gaffney Elementary School, 15 Rose Gaffney Road, Machias. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services, at 263-2014 or 461-8878 or email MKane@chcs-me.org to RSVP. Thanks to a local grant awarded to CHCS, AFFM is able to provide mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles from home.

Orono – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 3rd Monday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at AFFM (34 Main Street Orono). On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Presque Isle – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: Meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 7:30 pm at the Wesleyan Church (387 Centerline Rd). On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email Jim@affm.net to RSVP. Please remember to RSVP before you come.

Rockland—Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: Meets the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00PM-7:30PM at the Knox Center-Pen Bay Healthcare (6 White Street, Rockland). On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please RSVP by calling AFFM at 1-800-833-9786.

Saco— Kinship. Meets the 4th Wednesday of the month from 5:30-7:30PM at AFFM (333 Lincoln Street, Kimball Health Center). Please contact Meagan at 1-800-833-9786 or email meagan@affm.net to RSVP. Please RSVP before you come.

Sherman – Adoptive/Foster/Kinship: every 1st Monday of the month at 7 Cow Team Road in Sherman. Please contact Debbie Irish at 365-7133 for more information. This group does not meet in the summer.

South Paris – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Paris Public Library, 37 Market Square, South Paris. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email Meagan (Meagan@affm.net) to RSVP, please call 3 to 4 days in advance.

Waterboro – Foster/Adoptive: every 4 Thursday of the month from 6:30 – 7:30 pm at Waterboro Town Hall, 24 Townhouse Road, East Waterboro. Please contact Brigid at brigid.maaffsg@gmail.com.

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
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Affiliated With:
The North American Council on Adoptable Children
National Foster Parent Association
Generations United

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**Adoptive & Foster
Families of Maine, Inc.**
& The Kinship Program

New Resource Families Welcome! You are now receiving the Family Ties newsletter as part of your complimentary membership to AFFM! Learn more about AFFM and services offered by calling 1-800-833-9786 or visit www.affm.net

Locations: 34 Main Street, Orono, Maine

& 333 Lincoln Street, Saco, Maine

Phone: 1-800-833-9786

Email: info@affm.net

After Hour Emergency Support: 207-745-4159

Website: www.affm.net

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